

# Watts Riot as Rehearsal for Red Coup Discounted

BY GENE BLAKE

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Police Chief Tom Reddin has disputed a John Birch Society magazine article citing unnamed police as authority that the 1965 Watts riot was a rehearsal for a nationwide Communist revolution to be touched off by total burning of Los Angeles.

"The facts as stated in the article are not based on information in our files," Reddin said. "We do not reach the same conclusions the writer does. We do not make the same reading."

The article in the May issue of American Opinion is entitled "The Plan to Burn Los Angeles." It was written by Gary Allen, identified as a Los Angeles journalist and Stanford graduate.

Allen writes that his information came from Los Angeles police officers, and particularly the intelligence division of the Police Department.

"We have investigated to determine whom he may have talked to," Reddin said. "It was nobody in a position of authority—not I, the intelligence captain nor the former police chief (the late William H. Parker)."

## Wouldn't Have Talked

Reddin conceded the writer may have talked to "someone at the working level." But Capt. Harold E. Yarnell Jr., head of the intelligence division, said an investigation failed to turn up any officer to whom the writer had talked.

"If we had such information, we wouldn't talk to a writer," Yarnell pointed out.

Yarnell said the article "attempts to recite some history we believe is not based on fact," and then attempts to recite a major plot in the making.

"It is not our position that the August, 1965, riot was Communist-inspired," he said. "We have never been able to isolate any group as being motivating forces or manipulators."

Nevertheless, the article says it was a team of "highly trained Communists" known to the intelligence division as "The Organization" that planned and directed what happened in Watts.

The article claims the board of revolutionary strategy was composed of 40 to 50 Negroes sent by the Communists into the Los Angeles area from all over the United States.

## No Organization Found

It said they included Black Muslims, Black Nationalists, representatives from the paramilitary Deacons for Defense, the Communist Revolutionary Action Movement (R.A.M.) and professionals from other such "militant and Marxist groups."

Said Yarnell:

"We haven't been able to establish that any organization had anything to do with it. Three or four groups wanted to take credit. But when someone seriously became interested in talking to them about it, they backed down.

"I'm sure the Communist Party is gleefully watching every bit of dissension. But they haven't gone out in front."

The article specifically mentions reports that during the rioting, men wearing red armbands and speaking through bullhorns gave directions to the mobs. Yarnell said thorough investigation has failed to substantiate such reports.

The article also claims the rioters used stolen loot to build up an arsenal of weapons to be employed in the forthcoming major Communist revolution.

"The only arsenals we've found have been those of paramilitary right-wing groups," Yarnell said.

## 'Assassination' of Police

The article says that when the signal for the revolution is given, hundreds of officers will be lured into the Watts area by calls for police help, but will be assassinated.

Then "the plan" calls for destruction of the Central and Valley Services Divisions, the two main sources of police communications, possibly with rocket launchers or dynamite. Off-duty policemen would be assassinated in their homes.

Next, the torch would be put to Los Angeles, first in the surrounding oil fields and foothills, then the Civic Center and Wilshire area. Mobs would shoot all white men and children on sight, with the women being utilized as "rewards for the insurrectionists."

Finally, the revolution would spread to other urban areas across the country, the article claims.

Yarnell said the purported plot is reminiscent of weekly rumors which poured in after the 1965 riot and reached a peak last July.

## All Rumors Investigated

"We maintain a rumor board," he said. "Everything we hear, we log and investigate. We've never been able to substantiate anything.

"We would certainly be foolish to say it can't happen. But we don't know of any organized plot.

"We've heard many rumors and we would be interested in any information Mr. Allen has to substantiate them."

Yarnell said Allen even missed one of the best rumors—that gasoline tanker trucks would be used to spray gasoline on Civic Center buildings to set them afire.

"I don't know why they print such stuff," Yarnell said. "All it does is give some of these 'kooks' ideas."